November not to encourage or countenance peace negotiations.

An opportunity soon arose for giving a practical application to that decision. Early in December, 1916—a few days after I became Prime German Minister—the German Government issued its famous Peace Note.

Although summaries had appeared in the Foreign Press for days, the full text of the Note was not communicated to the Allied Governments until the 18th December,, when the American Ambassador delivered it, at the request of the German Government, at the Foreign Office. Lord Robert Cecil, who was acting Foreign Secretary in the absence through illness of Mr. Balfour, reported to the War Council that the American Ambassador, in transmitting the Note on behalf of the German Government, had indicated that the United States Government would deeply appreciate a confidential intimation in advance of the proposed reply by the British Government to the Note, and that his Government itself intended to make representations on the subject at the appropriate moment, and had for some time had such intention independently of the German Note.

As there has been some hostile comment in censorious circles upon the Allied replies to this German Peace approach, it would be well here to reproduce it in full. These replies have been represented as the spurning by the Allies of a favourable

opportunity for making a satisfactory peace. Unless the tone and the terms of the document are read carefully, it is not possible for anyone to come to any just conclusion as to the attitude adopted towards it by the Allied Powers.